

Burnt Njal, Njal is the knowing man, peaceful and friendly. His crafty devices are chiefly due to his knowledge of the law, which was full of chicane and known to few. These clever heroes, developed out of the mores of one period and fixed in the epics, became standards and guides for the mores of later times, in which they were admired as types of what every one would like to be.

717. Lack of historic sense amongst Christians. In the first centuries of the Christian era no school of religion or philosophy thought that it was an Inadmissible proceeding to concoct edifying writings and attribute them to some great authority of earlier centuries, or to invent historical documents to advance a cause or support the claims of a sect. This view came down to the Middle Ages. The lack of historic feeling is well shown by the crusaders who, after Antioch was taken, in the next few days and on the spot, began to write narratives of the deeds of their respective commanders which were not true, but were exaggerated, romantic, and imaginary. They were not derived from observation of facts, but were fashioned upon the romances of chivalry.¹ This was not myth making. It was conscious reveling in poetic creation according to the prevailing literary type. It was not falsehood, but it showed an entire absence of the sense of historic truth. In the case of the canon law, "the decretals were intended to furnish a documentary title, running back to apostolic times, for the divine institution of the primacy of the pope, and for the teaching office of bishops; a title which in truth did not exist." ² There was probably lacking in the minds of the men who invented the decretals all consciousness

of antagonism between fact and their literary work. If they could have been confronted with the ethical question, they would probably have said that they knew that the doctrines in question were true, and that if the fathers had had occasion to speak of them they would have said such things as were put in their mouths. Mediaeval history writing was not subject to canons of truth or taste. It included what was edifying, to the glory of

¹ Kugler, *KreuzzugS*) 52.

² Eicken, *MittelalterL Weltanschauung** 656.